COLUMBUS, Ohio – A young but resilient Wheeling Jesuit Varsity Rugby team fell to the larger, more physical Ohio State Buckeyes tonight in Columbus 44-21 to record their first loss of the season.

The Cardinals found themselves down 25-7 in the first half, thanks in large part to two Bryan Hoffman tries, and it looked as though Ohio State was going to pour on the points. However the young WJU team would keep their determination throughout the entire 80 minutes to put 14 more points on the board.

With about 10 minutes remaining, the Cardinals pulled within points of the Buckeyes, and it was anyone's game. A couple of slipped tackles however would give Ohio State a try to put the game out of reach as time expired.

"Our guys learned so much out there tonight," said Wheeling Jesuit Head Coach Eric Jerpe. "Ninety percent of our team are freshman, and we just couldn't compete with Ohio State's size and strength tonight."

In the opening minutes, it was clear Ohio State was going to put pressure on the inexperienced Cardinals, going up 13-0 after about 10 minutes. Dante Walters would get the Cards on the

board when he picked up a loose ball and found a seam in the defense to race 30 meters for the try. Ohio State added a two more tries before the half to go into the break 25-7.

“At halftime we basically told the guys we needed to up the intensity and start playing with more passion and enthusiasm, which we did,” said Jerpe. “We just needed to cut down on our mistakes. That will come as the guys have more time together and we grow as a team.”

The Cardinals added two tries in the second half to pull the score within 11 points. Zach Reichenbach, who was a strong ball carrier all day, powered over the line for a try just 10 minutes after the half. Minutes later, John Stapleton picked up a loose ball and dove over the line for the second Wheeling Jesuit try in five minutes. The score was then 32-21, and anybody’s ball game. However, that would be as close as the Cardinals would get. Final score, 44-21 Ohio State as Nevin Heard and JJ Emenecker scored tries for Ohio State to put the game away.

“We needed a good, hard and physical battle like that to really show our guys where we stand, and where we need to be,” said Jerpe. “We’ll get there. We just need more time together as a team.”

Wheeling Jesuit will face another strong opponent next week when they travel to Penn State to take on the Nittany Lions. The game is scheduled for 1pm on October 13th in Happy Valley. The Cardinals return home to face Notre Dame College for Homecoming on October 20th, and will host John Carroll College the week following on October 27th.